

In 1919, Lieutenant Colonel Dwight Eisenhower took part in the Army's first coast-to-coast truck convoy. The trip from Washington, D.C., to the Pacific, on a still-primitive system of roads, took 62 jarring, muddy days; and the young officer sputtered into San Francisco convinced that America deserved better.

Thirty-seven years later, President Dwight Eisenhower signed legislation creating the federal Interstate Highway System—making it possible for our generation to drive from coast to coast in a matter of days. Building those roads took the work of thousands. But they began with the willpower of one man unwilling to settle for a plainly broken system.

Today, when it comes to our energy needs, we find ourselves in a position young Lieutenant Eisenhower could have sympathized with: broken down on the side of the road. Our addiction to foreign oil pays the bills for dangerous regimes from Caracas to Tehran. Our greenhouse gas emissions are threatening future generations. Gas prices seem to set a new high every month, hitting \$3.38 this month and laying our economy low. Our demand for fossil fuels is almost entirely unchecked.

As we prepare to mark another Earth Day, the question is simple: Do we have the resolve and the ingenuity to simultaneously address the significant energy and environmental challenges before us?

I trust that we do. Congress has already shown its commitment by enacting comprehensive clean energy legislation to create millions of new clean energy jobs, save consumers hundreds of billions of dollars in energy costs, enhance America's energy independence, and cut global warming pollution. To put people back to work today and reduce our dependence on foreign oil tomorrow, we are seeking to double our renewable energy production and renovate public buildings to make them more energy efficient.

This action couldn't come any sooner. Not only is clean energy legislation a needed investment in our economy, if we don't act soon to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions polluting our air and water, the health of the environment and our own health will continue to degrade. The Environmental Protection Agency has determined that greenhouse gases are a danger to human health and welfare, and that there is justified cause for government to help address the threat.

Earth Day's call to action reminds us that, as a community, we can influence the quality of our water and air, the beauty of our local stream or woods, and the richness of our recreational surroundings. And, that environmental protection does not have to come at the expense of economic opportunities and job creation, encouraging new small business entrepreneurship and assuring the future of our long-standing business, farming and service industries. Economic growth does not have to mean environmental destruction.